DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 206 566 SP 017 350

AUTHOR Abram, Marie J.; Cobb, Robert A.
TITLE A Survey of Students Who Did Not Graduate and Their Parents Concerning Students' Motivation for Leaving School and Students' Educational Plans for the Future. PREPS Research Project, 1978-79.
INSTITUTION Western Kentucky Univ., Bowling Green. Professional Development Center Network.
PUB DATE [79]
NOTE 22p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Ability; *Academic Aspiration; *Dropout Attitudes; *Dropout Characteristics; Education Work Relationship; High School Equivalency Programs; *Parent Attitudes; Parent Background; School Holding Power; Secondary Education; Student Motivation

ABSTRACT

The population of this study consisted of 18 students who withdrew from the Glasgow Independent School System (Kentucky) during the 1975-76, 1976-77, and 1977-78 school years. The questionnaires submitted to the former students and their parents sought to determine how they felt about school prior to leaving, reasons for leaving school, opinions on whether dropping out had been a good or bad choice, what could have been done to make them remain in school, and their attitudes toward eventually taking and passing the General Education Development (GED) examination. A majority of parents and students believed the choice to leave school had been a bad one, and students felt that students with poor grades should repeat the year. Copies of the parent and student questionnaires are appended. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED206566

P D
N
C
Professional Development Center Network
Suite 427, College of Education, Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101, Phone (502) 745-2451

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

A Survey of Students Who Did Not Graduate and Their Parents Concerning Students' Motivation for Leaving School and Students' Educational Plans for the Future

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
MARIE J. ABRAM
PROF. DEV. CENTER NETWORK
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PREPS RESEARCH PROJECT

1978 - 79

The Glasgow Independent School System
Glasgow, Kentucky

REPORT PREPARED BY:

MARIE J. ABRAM
AND
ROBERT A. COBB

SP 017 350

FORWARD

This document is the final report of a PREPS research project conducted jointly by the PREPS research team of the Professional Development Center Network housed at Western Kentucky University and Mr. Roscoe Saltzman of the Glasgow Independent School System, Glasgow, Kentucky.

The PREPS Research Team

Marie J. Abram
Robert A. Cobb
Ronald D. Adams
Jack Neel
B. Glen Davis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
TITLE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	1
INSTRUMENTATION	1
POPULATION AND SAMPLING	2
DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES	2
ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS	3
FINDINGS	3
Description of the Sample	3
Data Provided by Former Students	5
Data Provided by Parents	9
SUMMARY	11
APPENDIX	14
Parent Survey Form	15
Student Survey Form	16

TITLE

A Survey of Students Who Did Not Graduate and Their Parents Concerning Students' Motivation for Leaving School and Students' Educational Plans for the Future.

INTRODUCTION

The Glasgow Independent School System was concerned with describing students who left school prior to graduation in terms of: (1) student demographic data (age, sex, grade leaving school, retention history, number of parents in the home, educational level of parents, number of siblings, reading and mathematics achievement scores, and academic aptitude) and (2) parent and student attitudes toward education.

The purpose for obtaining this information was to begin to: (1) better understand what the high school might do to help students stay in school, (2) better counsel students who chose to leave school prior to graduation, and (3) help students who have already left school prepare for the GED examination.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What Glasgow students left school prior to graduation, how did they and their parents feel about school prior to leaving, and what were student and parent attitudes toward school and the GED examination?

INSTRUMENTATION

Two separate survey instruments were jointly developed by the PREPS Research Team of the Professional Development Center Network and Mr. Roscoe Saltzman of the Glasgow Independent School System. The first instrument surveyed former students who had left the Glasgow schools prior to graduation. The second instrument surveyed the former student's parents. Copies of both instruments can be found in the appendix.

Student achievement was tested using the Hardford Achievement Test published by Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.

Academic aptitude was tested using the Otis published by Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.

School records were used as the source of all data not collected on the survey forms.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population of the study consisted of all students who withdrew from the Glasgow Independent School System during the 1977-78, 1976-77, and 1975-76 school year and who did not transfer to another high school (n = 160). Survey instruments were sent to the entire population of former student and their parent(s). The sample used in this study consisted of those students in the population from whom data was available from both the student and their parent (n = 18). Three survey forms were returned by students but not by parents and three survey forms were returned by parents but not by students. These six surveys were dropped from the study after it was determined that the exclusion of this data did not change the results of the study. Throughout the study the students who withdrew will be referred to as former students.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

A list of the student population was developed using the school records. The appropriate survey instruments were mailed to both the former student and their parents using the last known address. A second survey was sent to the former student whenever parents supplied the school with a more recent address (the parent survey asked for a current address on the student). The survey instruments were sent out in March 1979 and respondents were given a month to return the instruments.

Instruments were accompanied by a letter signed by Mr. Eldon Smith, Glasgow Superintendent, asking for cooperation. A stamped self-addressed return envelope was included to facilitate the return of the instruments.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The sample used in the analysis was a purposive sample in that it was composed of persons on whom current addresses were available and of persons who were willing to take the time to complete the instrument. Due to the small size of the sample caution should be taken in generalizing the findings of this study.

FINDINGS

Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of 18 sets of data of students who had left the Glasgow Independent Schools during the 1977-78, 1976-77, and 1975-76 school years and their parents.

Two thirds of the sample were boys (boys = 11) and one third of the sample was girls (girls = 7).

Ten former students left school at sixteen years of age, five at 17, two at 18, and one at 19.

Four former students came from one parent families. Twelve former students came from two-parent families. Data on family structure was not available on two students.

The number of brothers:

None	7
One or two	6
Three or four	4
Five or more	1

The number of sisters:

None	8
One or two	5
Three or four	4
Five or more	1

Number of former students with mother's educational level reported at:

Sixth grade or less	4
Seventh or eighth grade	3
Ninth or tenth grade	3
Eleventh or twelfth grade	4
No data available	4

Number of former students with father's educational level reported at:

Sixth grade or less	5
Seventh or eighth grade	3
Ninth or tenth grade	2
Eleventh or twelfth grade	1
No data available	7

Number of former students with seventh grade reading achievement in stanines:

One	1
Two	2
Three	2
Four	2
Five	1
Six	1
Seven or higher	0
No data available	9

Number of former students with seventh grade mathematics achievement in stanines:

One	0
Two	4
Three	4
Four	1
Five or higher	0
No data available	9

Number of former students in various academic aptitude categories (Otis):

70 - 74	2
75 - 79	3
80 - 84	0
85 - 90	2
91 - 95	2
96 -100	1
No data available	8

Number of former students retained in each grade:

First	5
Second	2
Third or fourth	1
Fifth or sixth	0
Seventh or eighth	3
Ninth or tenth	6
Eleventh or twelfth	1

Data Provided by Former Students

Former students were asked the reason why they had left school. Three categories were used at least four times. These categories were: (1) school was not teaching me what I wanted to know, (2) I had poor grades and didn't think I would graduate, and (3) other.

The reason I left school was because:

- school was not teaching me what I wanted to know 6
- I had poor grades and didn't think I would graduate 8
- I wanted to get married 2
- I wanted to work full time 3
- other 16
  (didn't like school/principal-4, didn't feel school important-3, not learning anything-3, needed special education-2, jail-1, ill-1, pregnant-1, new and found adjustment difficult-1)

Former students were asked whether they felt their decision to leave was a good or a bad choice. Six students believed they had made a good choice and 11 students believed they had made a bad choice.

I think my choice to leave school was:

- a good choice 6
- a bad choice 11
- no reply 1

Former students were asked what the school might have done to keep them from leaving school. Two categories had four or more responses. These categories were: (1) a special teacher to help me with my studies and (2) other.

I might not have left school if the school had:

- allowed me to attend half-days instead of full-days 3
- a special teacher to help me with my studies 5
- not asked me to repeat my last grade 3
- allowed me to repeat my last grade in school 0
- more clubs and sports for me to be in 0
- let me enroll in a vocational education program 1
- other 7
  (less teacher pressure-2, allowed one to combine school and work-1, not failed me in one subject area-2, more help from teachers-1, not asked me to leave (pregnant)-1)

Students were asked how they were continuing their education since they left school. Three categories were used four or more times. These categories were: (1) reading on my own, (2) studying for the GED examination, and (3) other.

I have been continuing my education since I left school by:

- reading on my own 4
- taking correspondence courses 0
- taking an evening course 2
- returning to high school full time 0
- studying for the GED examination 5
- other 6
  (attending Cave Lake Workshop-2, machine shop course-1, courses sponsored by job-1, courses during time in Army-1, Manpower Training-1)

Students were asked whether they had taken the GED examination and passed successfully. Four students indicated they had. Fourteen indicated they had not.

I have taken the GED examination for a high school certificate and passed the test successfully:

- yes 4
- no 14

The four who took and passed the GED examination were asked two follow-on questions. The first question asked them whether they were glad they had taken the GED examination. All four answered yes.

I am glad I took the GED examination:

- yes 4
- no 0

The second question asked them how passing the GED helped them. Three categories had at least one response: (1) made me a better person, (2) gives me more job security, and (3) other.

I feel that passing the GED examination has helped me in the following ways:

- made me a better person 3
- helped me get a job 0
- helped me earn more money on my old job 0
- gives me more job security 1
- helps me raise my children better 0
- other 2
  (more self-respect-1, shows me I can do things on my own-1)

The fourteen who had not passed the GED were asked four questions. The first question asked whether they had heard of the GED examination. Twelve answered yes, one answered no, and one did not give a reply to this question.

I have heard about the GED examination that would let me earn a high school certificate by taking a test:

- yes 12
- no 1
- no reply 1

The second question asked whether they knew that a GED Aid was available to help them get ready for the GED examination. Nine answered yes, four answered no, and one did not reply.

I know that a GED Aide is available to help me get ready for the GED examination:

- yes 9
- no 4
- no reply 1

The third question asked whether they would like to take the GED some time. Nine answered yes, four answered no, and one did not reply.

I would like to take the GED examination some time:

- yes 9
- no 4
- no reply 1

The fourth question asked how they thought that passing the GED would help them. Four categories received at least four responses. These categories were: (1) make me a better person, (2) help me get a job, (3) help me earn more money on my present job, (4) give me more job security, (5) help me raise my children better, and (6) other.

I think that passing the GED examination would help me in the following ways:

- make me a better person 5
- help me get a job 10
- help me earn more money on my present job 4
- give me more job security 8
- help me raise my children better 3
- other 1
  (let me know I was knowledgeable enough to pass-1)

Former students were asked whether they were presently working at a full-time job. Ten indicated they were and eight indicated they were not.

I am now working at a full-time job:

- yes 10
- no 8

Former students were asked whether they liked their job. Thirteen answered yes, none answered no, and five did not respond to this question.

I like my job:

- yes 13
- no 0
- no reply 5

Former students were asked whether they felt more schooling would help them get a better job. Eleven answered yes, three answered no, and four gave no reply.

I feel more schooling would help me get a better job:

- yes 11
- no 3
- no reply 4

Former students were asked whether students who did not do good work in a grade should repeat the grade. Twelve persons answered yes, four answered no, and four did not respond.

I feel that students who do not do good work in a grade at school should repeat the grade:

- yes 12
- no 4
- no reply 4

Data Provided by Parents

Parents were asked the reason they believed their child had left school. Three categories received over four responses: (1) school was not teaching my child what my child wanted to know, (2) my child had poor grades and didn't think he/she would graduate, and (3) other.

As far as I know, the reason my child left school was because:

- school was not teaching my child what my child wanted to know 5
- my child had poor grades and didn't think he/she would graduate 6
- he/she wanted to get married 1
- he/she wanted to work full time 3
- other 7
  (needed more teacher help-1, fell behind while ill-1, retained-1, just wanted to quit-2, wanted to attend Cave Lake Workshop-1, had difficulty adjusting to new school-1)

Parents were asked whether they felt their children had made a good choice or a bad choice. Fourteen parents indicated they felt their child had made a bad choice, three indicated they felt their child had made a good choice, and one did not reply.

I think my child made:

- a good choice 3
- a bad choice 14
- no reply 1

Parents were asked what the school might have done to help their child stay in school. Three categories received at least four responses: (1) allowed my child to attend half-days instead of full-days, (2) a special teacher to help my child with his/her studies, and (3) other.

As far as I know, my child might not have left school if the school had:

- allowed my child to attend half-days instead of full-days — 4
- a special teacher to help my child with his/her studies — 7
- not asked my child to repeat his/her last grade — 1
- allowed my child to repeat his/her last grade — 2
- more clubs and sports for him/her to be in — 0
- let him/her enroll in a vocational education program — 1
- other — 5
  (not retained my child-1, given special education-1)

Parents were asked whether they felt it was important that their child got a high school certificate at some later time. All eighteen parents indicated they felt it was important.

I think that it is important that my child gets a high school certificate at some later time:

- yes — 18
- no — 0

Parents were asked whether they encouraged their children in furthering their education. Three categories received over four responses: (1) read on his/her own, (2) return to full-time school, and (3) take the GED examination to get a high school certificate.

I encourage my child to:

- read on his/her own — 6
- take correspondence courses — 2
- take evening courses — 2
- return to full-time school — 4
- take the GED examination to get a high school certificate — 12
- other — 3
  (attend Cave Lake Workshop-2, take the GED-1)

Parents were asked whether they felt more school would help their child get a better job. Sixteen answered yes and two answered no.

I feel that more schooling would help my child get a better job.

- yes 16
- no 2

SUMMARY

The population of this study was students who had left school prior to graduation during the school years 1977-78, 1976-77, and 1975-76. Data was also collected from parents of these students. Out of 160 surveys sent to former students and their parents eighteen matched sets of data (11%) were returned and formed the basis of this study.

Two-thirds of the respondents were boys (boys = 11) and one-third were girls (girls = 7). Most former students had left school at 16, had come from two-parent families, had two or less brothers, and had two or less sisters. Mothers' educational level was reported as eighth grade or less for half of the cases on which data was available. Fathers' educational level was reported as eighth grade or less for almost three quarters of the cases on which data was available. Reading achievement in seventh grade was at the sixth stanine or lower for the nine cases where data was available. Mathematics achievement in seventh grade was at the fourth stanine or lower for the nine cases where data was available. Academic aptitude exceeded 90 in only three of the 11 cases on which data was available. A total of 18 retentions were reported over the school cases of the sample.

Both parents and former students were asked the reason for leaving school. Both used "other" and "my child had poor grades and did not feel

would graduate" responses most often. Former students used "other" 16 times and parents used it seven times. Former students used "poor grades" eight times and parents used it six times.

Both parents and former students believed the choice to leave school was a bad one in the majority of cases. Former students reported the decision as a bad choice 11 times and parents reported it as a bad choice 14 times.

Both parents and former students were asked what the school might have done to help the student stay in school. Both former students and parents used "other" and "a special teacher to help with studies" most often. Former students used "other" seven times whereas parents used it five times. Former students used "special teacher" five times whereas parents used it seven times.

Four former students had already received a high school certificate by examination. Of the remaining 14, twelve stated that they wanted to earn a high school certificate. All 18 parents indicated they felt it was important for their child to earn a high school certificate.

Both former student and parents indicated that further studying was important. Former students listed "other", "studying for the GED", and "reading on their own" most often as a way of continuing their education. Parents listed "studying for the GED", and "reading on their own" most often as ways they encouraged their child to continue working on their education.

Both former students and parents felt that more schooling would help former students get a better job. Eleven students and 16 parents expressed this belief.

Four former students had successfully passed the GED examination. All four were glad they had passed and generally checked off non-job related responses when indicating ways the GED had helped them. Fourteen former students had not attempted/not passed the GED. Of the 14, twelve knew the GED was available, nine knew a GED aide was available, and nine planned to take the GED at some time. When these 14 former students who had not taken the GED were asked how they expected the GED would help them it was found that three-quarters of their responses were job-related.

Ten of the 18 former students reported working full-time jobs at the present time and 13 reported liking their jobs.

Twelve of the former students reported that they felt students who did not do good work in a grade should repeat the grade. This is an interesting finding in that none of these former students who would appear to be prime candidates for retention (low seventh grade achievement scores and poor grades listed as reason for withdrawal) chose the response category "allowed me to repeat my last grade" as a way the school could have helped them. Rather they listed special teachers, more help from regular teachers, and less classroom pressure as ways of achieving better grades.

APPENDIX

PARENT SURVEY FORM

The Glasgow Independent School System is trying to learn more about students who do not complete high school. We would like you to complete this form thinking about _____. We will also ask your child to complete a similar form. We would appreciate each of you answering your own form by yourselves. After you have mailed the forms back to us, you can talk about them.

_____
Eldon Smith, Superintendent

---

1. As far as I know, the reason my child left school was because: (check as many as apply)

___ school was not teaching my child what my child wanted to know
___ my child had poor grades and didn't think he/she would graduate
___ he/she wanted to get married
___ he/she wanted to work full time
___ other (please explain) _____

2. I think my child made:

___ a good choice
___ a bad choice

3. As far as I know, my child might not have left school if the school had: (check as many as apply)

___ allowed my child to attend half-days instead of full-days
___ a special teacher to help my child with his/her studies
___ not asked my child to repeat his/her last grade
___ allowed my child to repeat his/her last grade
___ more clubs and sports for him/her to be in
___ let him/her enroll in a vocational education program
___ other (please explain) _____

4. I think that it is important that my child gets a high school certificate at some later time:

___ yes
___ no

5. I encourage my child to:(check as many as apply)

___ read on his/her own
___ take correspondence courses
___ take evening courses
___ return to full-time school
___ take the GED examination to get a high school certificate
___ other (please explain) _____

6. I feel that more schooling would help my child get a better job. ___ yes ___ no

7. Please give child's address if different from label.

--place label here--

Address _____
City _____
State and Zip _____

Thank you for your help. Please return in the enclosed stamped self-addressed envelope.

STUDENT SURVEY FORM

The Glasgow Independent School System would like you to answer all of the questions on this survey form. After you have answered the questions, please mail the survey form back to the school in the postage-paid envelope that is enclosed.

The survey form has been designed to help the school learn more about students who leave school before completing the twelfth grade. Thank you for your help.

_____
Eldon Smith, Superintendent

---

1. The reason I left school was because: (check as many as apply)

____ school was not teaching me what I wanted to know
____ I had poor grades and didn't think I would graduate
____ I wanted to get married
____ I wanted to work full time
____ other (please explain) _____

2. I think that my choice to leave school was:

____ a good choice
____ a bad choice

3. I might not have left school if the school had: (check as many as apply)

____ allowed me to attend half-days instead of full-days
____ a special teacher to help me with my studies
____ not asked me to repeat my last grade
____ allowed me to repeat my last grade in school
____ more clubs and sports for me to be in
____ let me enroll in a vocational education program
____ other (please explain) _____

4. I have been continuing my education since I left school by: (check as many as apply)

____ reading on my own
____ taking correspondence courses
____ taking an evening course
____ returning to high school full time
____ studying for the GED examination
____ other (please explain) _____

5. I have taken the GED examination for a high school certificate and passed the test successfully.

☐ yes ☐ no

If the answer to question 5 is yes answer these questions.

a. I am glad I took the GED examination

☐ yes ☐ no

b. I feel that passing the GED examination has helped me in the following ways: (check all that apply)

___ made me a better person
___ helped me get a job
___ helped me earn more money on my old job
___ gives me more job security
___ helps me raise my children better
___ other (please explain) ___
_____
_____

If the answer to question 5 is no answer these questions.

a. I have heard about the GED examination that would let me earn a high school certificate by taking a test.

☐ yes ☐ no

b. I know that a GED Aid is available to help me get ready for the GED examination.

☐ yes ☐ no

c. I would like to take the GED examination some time.

☐ yes ☐ no

d. I think that passing the GED examination would help me in the following ways: (check all that apply)

___ make me a better person
___ help me get a job
___ help me earn more money on my present job
___ give me more job security
___ help me raise my children better
___ other (please explain) ___
_____
_____

6. I am now working at a full-time job. ☐ yes ☐ no

7. The kinds of work I do on my job are _____
_____

8. I like my job. ☐ yes ☐ no

9. I feel more schooling would help me get a better job. ☐ yes ☐ no

10. I feel that students who do not do good work in a grade at school should repeat the grade.